



Supporting Family
Engagement To
Promote Literacy

Grades K-3

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Abundant Reading Materials and Reading Opportunities for Grades K-3

A Resource for Educators



Introduction

This resource is intended to support educators in building family partnerships to enhance students' literacy development at school and at home. The goal is for schools, child care providers, and families to effectively partner to engage children in literacy-based activities. By providing practical ideas and resources for families, schools are better able to bridge literacy instruction from classrooms into homes, giving children more literacy opportunities in multiple contexts.

The Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) General Education Leadership Network (GELN) Michigan Early Literacy Task Force (ELTF) created *Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy: Grades K to 3* to improve children's literacy.¹ The Michigan Department of Education endorses the use of the Essentials as quality, research-informed instructional practices. The evidence supporting the family literacy practices is informed by research that meets rigorous standards established by the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) in classroom settings. These evidence-based classroom practices were adapted for home use; however, research has not investigated the efficacy of all of these practices in home contexts.

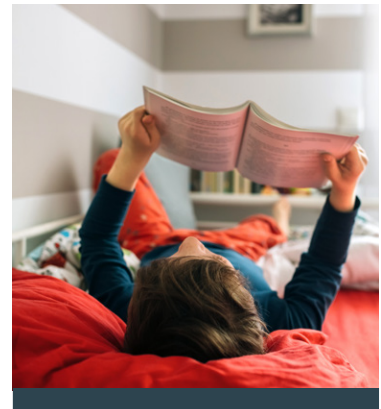
The Essential Instructional Practices include providing children with abundant reading materials and reading opportunities. This Essential supports the literacy development of children across the other instructional practices. The opportunity to read widely, across genres, and for different purposes, along with the interactions surrounding books, reading, and writing with teachers and parents, undergirds the other nine Essential Instructional Practices. Promoting literacy with numerous reading experiences daily is key to children's literacy development and achievement.² Teachers and families who read themselves model good reading habits for children. Reading in the early years begins with reading aloud to children. As children start to read on their own, teachers and families should provide ample and diverse reading materials, both in print and digitally. Research has linked ample opportunities to read both in and out of school to increased reading achievement, as it provides a context for engaged reading. Furthermore, studies have shown that opportunities to read outweigh a child's family educational attainment when determining reading achievement.³ To help families support literacy at home, you can share this strategy with them.



Sharing Why Abundant Reading Materials and Opportunities Is an Essential Practice With Families

Research shows significant links between home literacy resources and children’s reading achievement, as well as between positive parent-child literacy relationships and achievement. When families supported their child at home by providing ample reading materials, modeling reading, and overseeing literacy activities, children achieved significantly higher literacy rates than children whose families did not support literacy development in these ways.⁴

By providing a wide variety of reading materials for their children, families show how reading is part of daily life in different contexts, including school, home, and in the community. These can include digital and print materials, newspapers, comic books, and environmental print such as store signs and food labels. These materials can also be found at doctors’ offices, bus stations, libraries, and grocery stores, as well as at school and at home. It is important for educators to support families in their efforts to show that reading is not something that is done only at school, but that reading has different purposes for children in the world where they live.



Supporting Families in the Essential Practice of Providing Ample Reading Materials and Opportunities

The Essential Instructional Practices also include collaboration with families in promoting literacy. Schools can partner with families to learn more about how to provide their children with opportunities to read at home. For example, schools can share with families the “Opportunities to Read” infographic that accompanies this brief. The MiFamily Engagement Framework⁵ outlines several high-impact strategies that help support student achievement and family engagement, including:

- Helping families secure library cards for their children and learn about other ways to get reading materials, like visiting yard sales or bookmobiles and sharing materials with others;
- Providing books and other materials for students to take home, including those in students’ home languages;
- Inviting families into school and classroom libraries to choose books to borrow with their child;
- Holding family nights at local libraries to share information about how to select reading materials for and with their children; and
- Providing families with information on how to access online reading resources.

The key is for schools to partner as much as possible with families in their efforts to support students’ literacy learning and support families in their efforts to build a rich home literacy environment.



Resources

The following resources provide more information about abundant reading materials and opportunities:

Educator Resources:

- [MAISA Professional Learning Resources and Modules for the Essential Instructional Practices in Literacy](#)

Library Resources:

- [ILoveLibraries—for Parents](#)
- [List of Michigan's Public Libraries by City](#)

Tips and Resources:

- [Reading Is Fundamental](#)
- [Reading Rockets: Parent Engagement](#)



Endnotes

- ¹ Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators, General Education Leadership Network, Early Literacy Task Force. (2016). *Essential instructional practices in early literacy: Grades K to 3*. https://literacyessentials.org/downloads/gelndocs/k-3_literacy_essentials.pdf
- ² Cullinan, B. E. (2000). Independent reading and school achievement. *School Library Media Research*, 3. <http://www.ala.org/aasl/pubs/slr/vol3>
- ³ Guthrie, J. T., Schafer, W. D., & Chun-Wei, H. (2001). Benefits of opportunity to read and balanced instruction on the NAEP. *Journal of Educational Research*, 94(3), 145–162.
- ⁴ Dong, Y., Wu, S., Dong, W., & Tang, Y. (2020). The effects of home literacy environment on children’s reading comprehension development: A meta-analysis. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice*, 20(2), 63–82. <https://doi.org/10.12738/jestp.2020.2.005>
- ⁵ Michigan Department of Education. (2020). *MiFamily: Michigan’s family engagement framework*. https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/MIFamily_Family_Engagement_Framework_683447_7.pdf

Acknowledgments

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